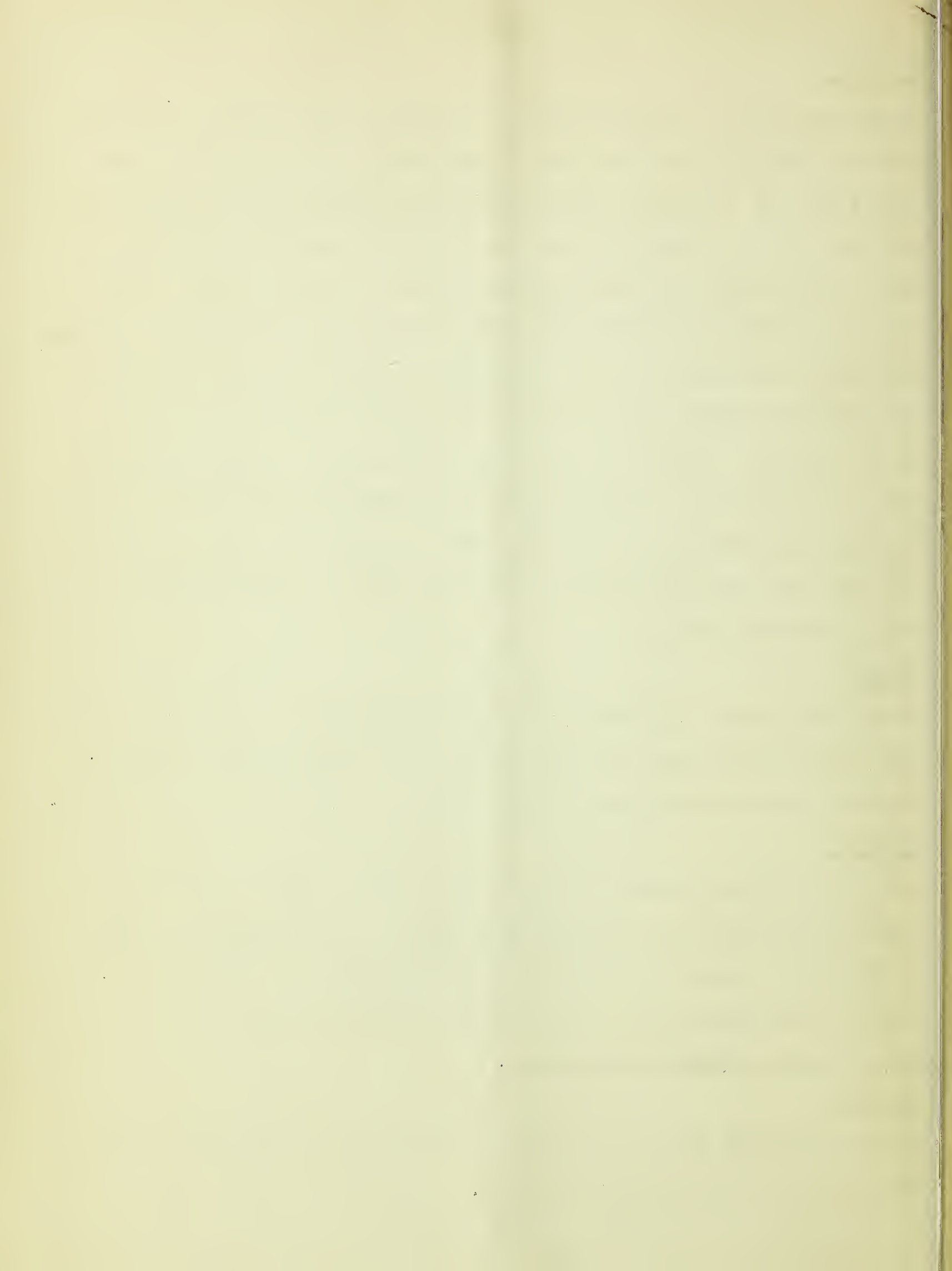


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F O R T U N E S W A S H E D A W A Y

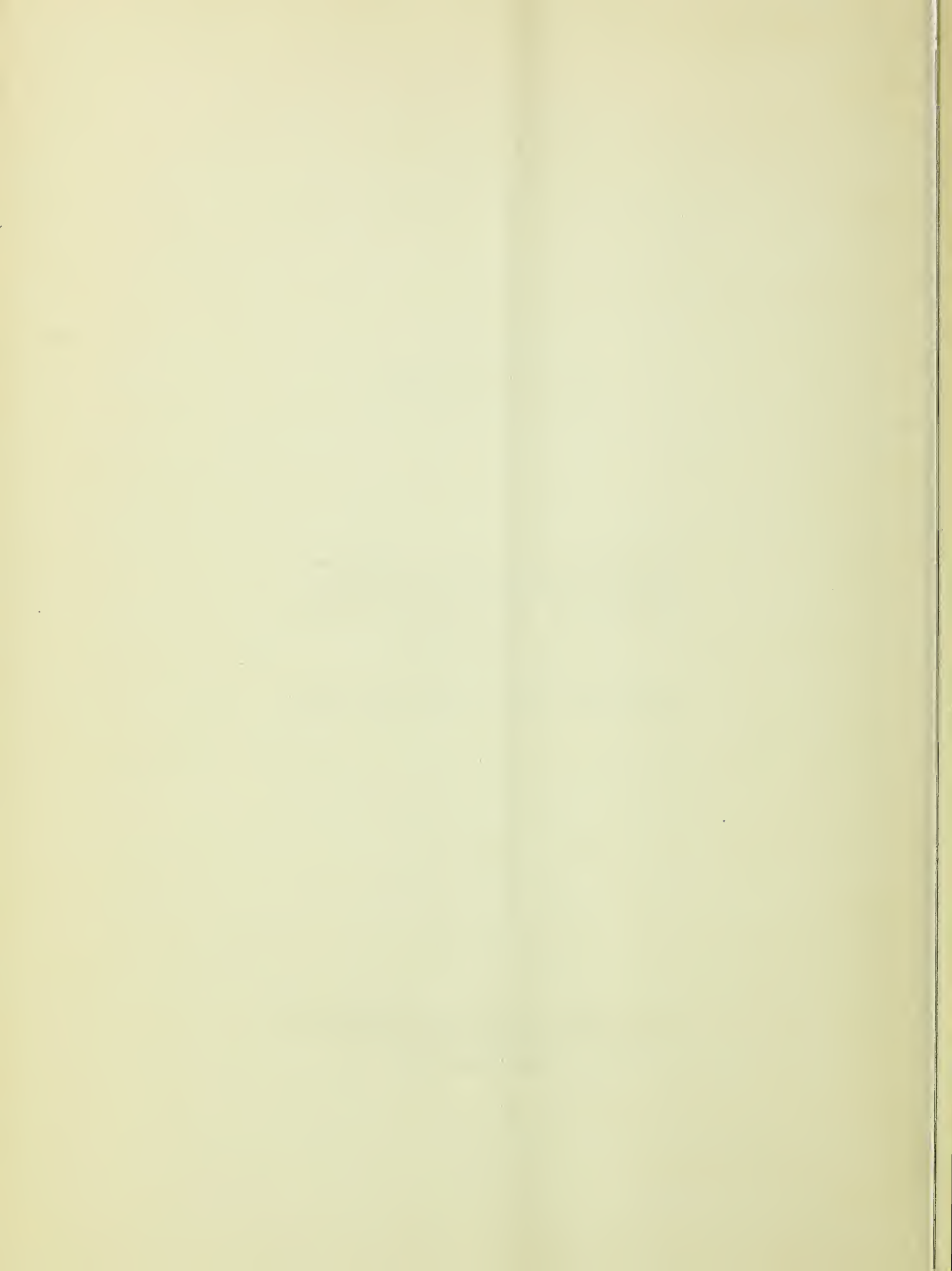
"THE GOOD TENANT"

Broadcast No. 47 in a series
of discussions of soil con-
servation in the Ohio Valley.

WLW, Cincinnati

March 18, 1939 6:45-7:00 p.m.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
Dayton, Ohio



SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ALLISON

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ALLISON

How and when agriculture began, no man knows. Perhaps the primitive hunter began by taming young animals. Perhaps he stored wild grain, and quite by accident found that he could propagate the seed. But it is known that predynastic tombs of Egypt and Mesopotamia, tombs four thousand years old, contained grains of wheat of an advanced type, contained flax and barley. As agriculture developed, so did the relationship of landlord and tenant. In Roman law, this relationship arose from the contract of "locutio conductio", letting and hiring. It developed in the feudal system of the Middle Ages, when all holdings were a chain of vassalships. Today, the landlord and the tenant are two men--working together, working toward a common end, working to glean from the soil its bountiful wealth without destroying the parent that nurtures that wealth--the soil.

ORGAN: IF IT RAINS, WHO CARES.

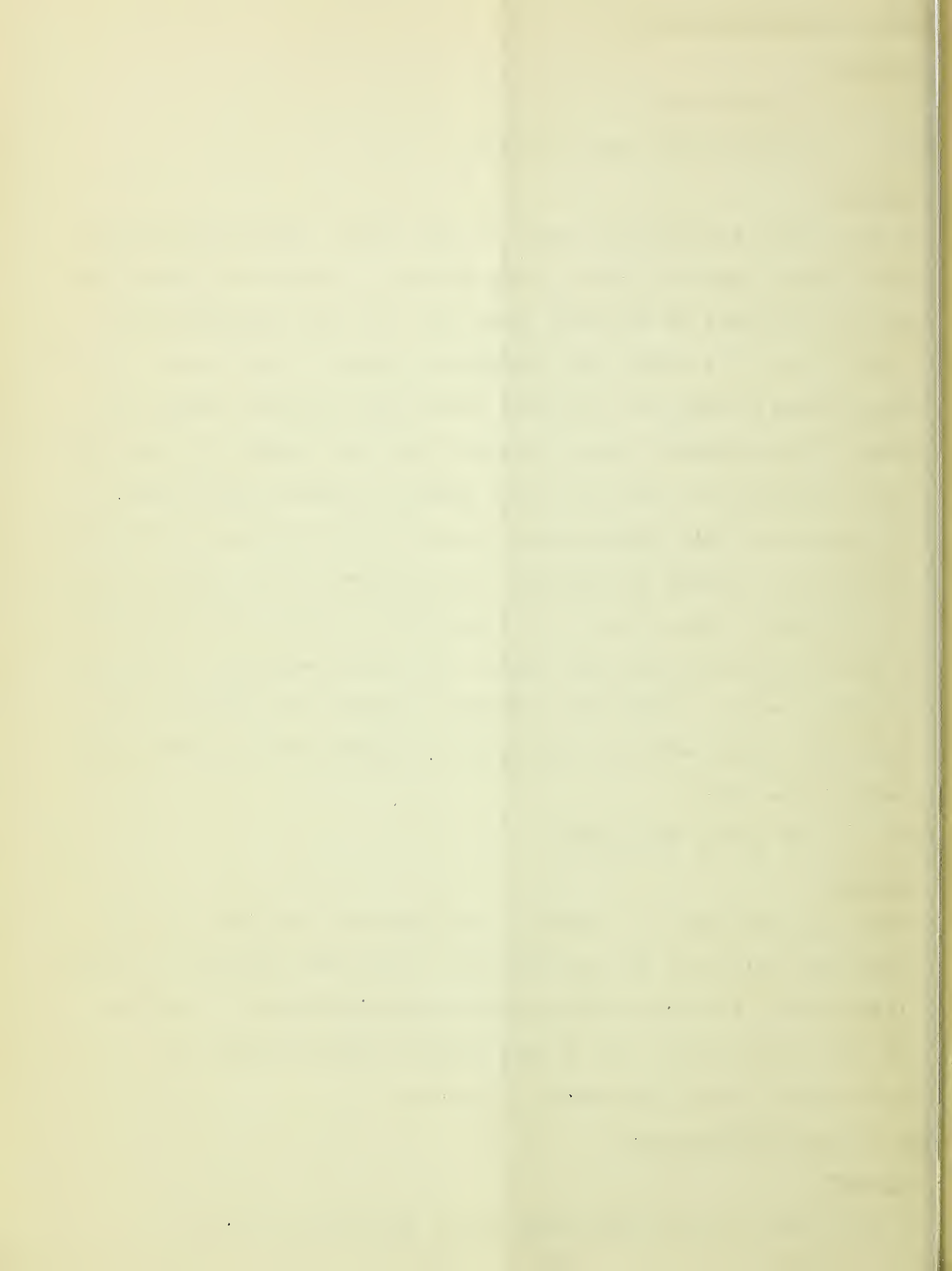
ALLISON

There are two types of tenants: men who mine the soil, men who bleed the soil, men who rob the soil of its last vestige of fertility--and men who guard the soil with the stewardship it merits. Of this latter type, such a good tenant is Wayne Clement of Livingston County, Michigan. In 1938...

SOUND: Man chopping wood.

CLEMENT

Winter time is woods time, Ray, and I see you're at it.



ROBINSON

Oh, hi there, Wayne.

CLEMENT

What're you doing--getting up a few fence posts?

ROBINSON

Yeah, just a few. Sit down and rest a spell.

CLEMENT

Thanks. Believe I will.

ROBINSON

I don't need many posts this year. We're rearranging some of the fields, taking out a lot of fence.

CLEMENT

Well, that's just what I came over to see you about. I heard that you were doing a lot of work over here, and I wanted to find out just what was going on.

ROBINSON

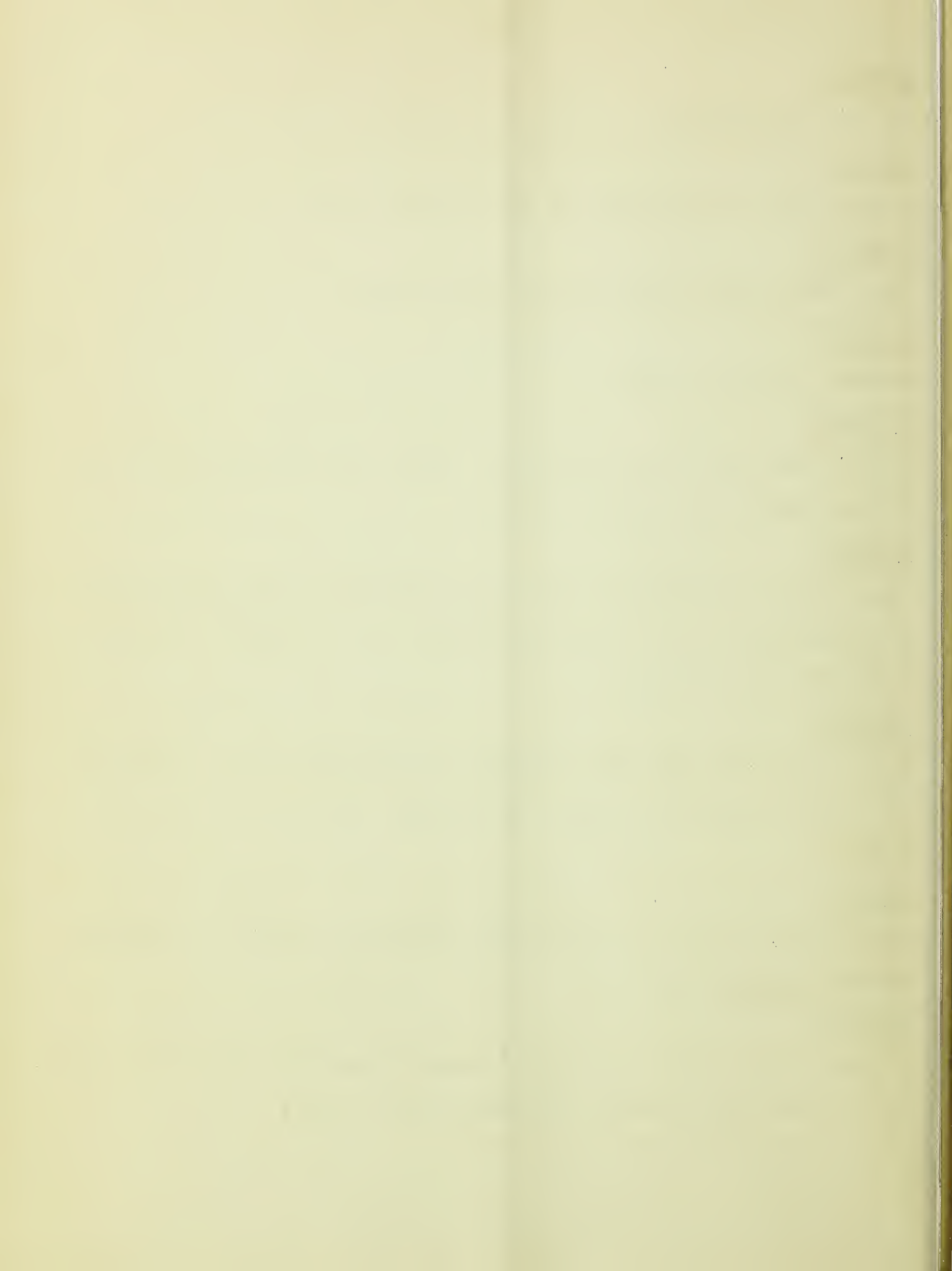
Why, Wayne, I'm just about changing my whole farm plan. Putting in a soil conservation plan, working with those fellows over at Howell.

CLEMENT

Believe me, I can do a little soil conserving myself. My farm is in the darndest fix.

ROBINSON

I guess a lot of them are around here. Seems like most of us don't think about the soil--all we think about is feed.



CLEMENT

That's the truth. Look at the folks that have been farming this land I'm renting. For the last ten years, they've taken everything off and put nothing back. I want to seed it down and build it up.

ROBINSON

It'll take a long time. It'll take a long time for me to get my plan working, but by golly, I'm going to do it.

CLEMENT

We've all got to do it. Why, I know one fellow over here who had 240 acres left to him, and he's in debt today. He just let the farm run down.

ROBINSON

It don't pay to ruin the land. I've found that out. Some of my pastures are so poor that the cows just waste their time walking over it.

CLEMENT

I'm in the same fix. Some of the cows need bicycles, so they can get over enough ground to get enough feed in one day.

ROBINSON

You're a funny fellow, in a way, Wayne. Here you are, just renting the land, yet you're trying to build it up for someone else.

CLEMENT

Maybe I'm funny, Ray, but I don't see any difference in owning the land or just renting. It may not pay me at first, but at least it'll show that I'm not tearing the farm to pieces. And that'll give me a recommendation wherever I go.

ORGAN: WINTER WONDERLAND.

ALLISON

Wayne Clement studied the soil conservation plan adopted by Ray Robinson, became imbued with the idea. For he came from a famous farming family, and he cherished the soil. His plans to save his own soil began to materialize that same spring when...

SOUND: Car driving down highway.

WILLIAMS

Hey, there's a car stuck in the ditch, Harold. We'd better see what the trouble is.

SOUND: Car slows up slightly.

LAKIN

It's a woman...and some children.

WILLIAMS

Probably got over too far when that other car passed.

LAKIN

Yeah, this will be a chance for you to redeem yourself for being pulled out yourself last week.

SOUND: Car stops. Car door opens, and men get out.

LAKIN

Bet you could use some help right now, couldn't you?

ALICE

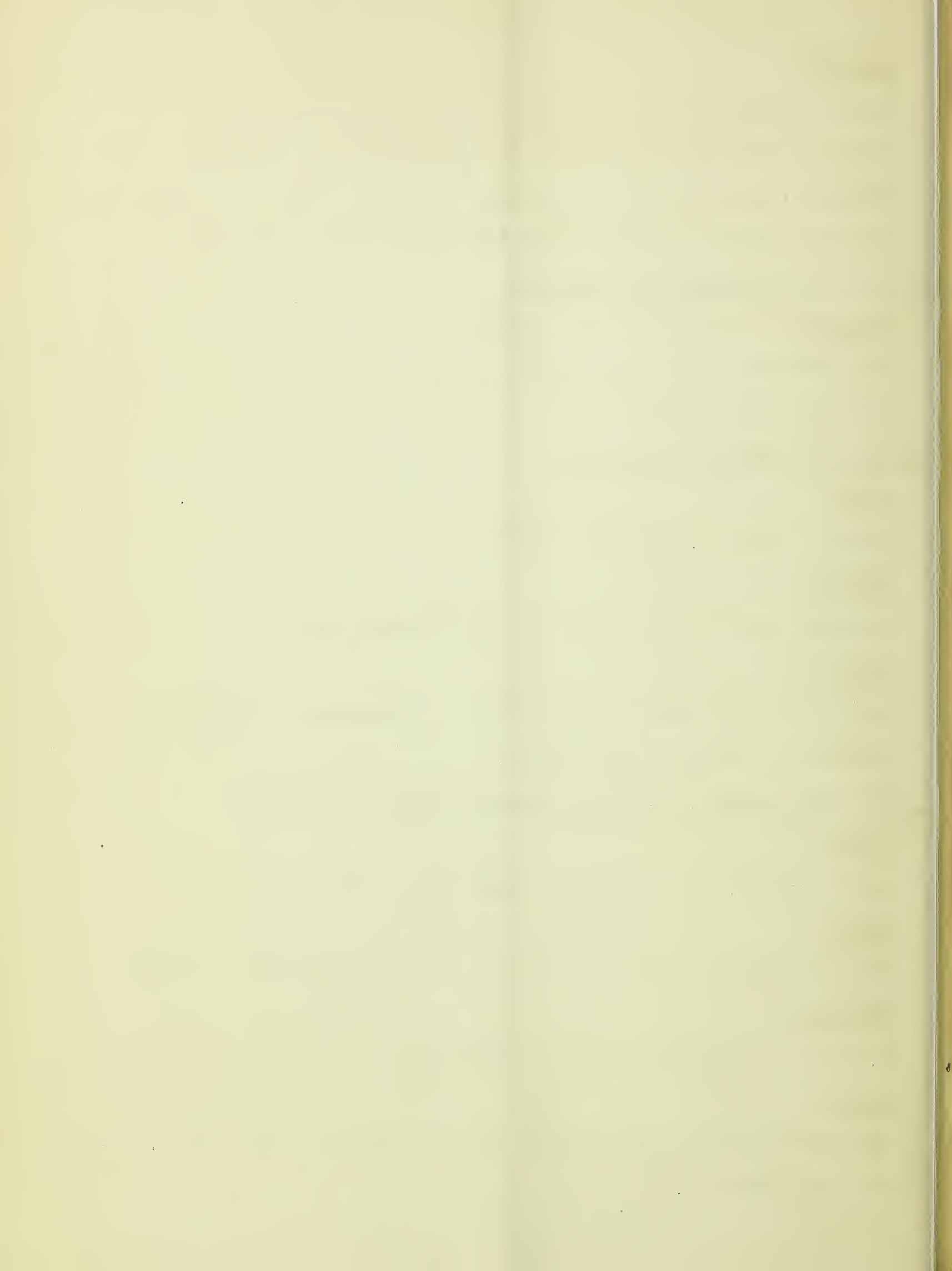
Yes, I guess I could. This side is bad every time it rains.

WILLIAMS

I think we can get you out, all right.

ALICE

Oh, don't bother. My husband is over there in the field. He can get the tractor.



WILLIAMS

You're not stuck bad. Just your front wheel. We can help you out and you won't have to bother your husband.

LAKIN

Here, fasten this tire chain on that bumper while I get the car around here.

SOUND: Rattle of chains. Car motor starts.

WILLIAMS

There, now. Keep your wheel turned. All right, take it easy.

SOUND: Motor races.

LAKIN

Whoa, there, something's wrong. Have you got it in gear?

ALICE

Yes, but something is wrong, sure enough.

WILLIAMS

Looks like the rear axle is shot.

ALICE

Here's my husband coming now. Maybe he can fix it.

SOUND: Motor cuts off.

Hello, there!

CLEMENT

Howdy!

LAKIN

I guess we could be better heroes if we were better mechanics.

I think something's wrong with the axle.

CLEMENT

It's probably that pin sheared again. Been expecting it right along.

ALICE

Wayne, I'm going on up to the house. You can get it out.

CLEMENT

All right, Alice, take the children and go ahead.

WILLIAMS

Must be a spring here in the roadside. I've noticed water flowing here before.

CLEMENT

No, by golly, it's the water from that field there. Say, aren't you the men who are working on erosion?

WILLIAMS

Yes, we're with the Soil Conservation Service. This is Mr. Lakin and my name's Williams.

WILLIAMS, CLEMENT, AND LAKIN

(Exchange greetings)

CLEMENT

Well, you're just the men I want to see. I need help and I need it bad. I don't see how I'm going to make a living on this rolling land. I'm just not used to it.

LAKIN

Where are you from? You're just renting this place, aren't you?

CLEMENT

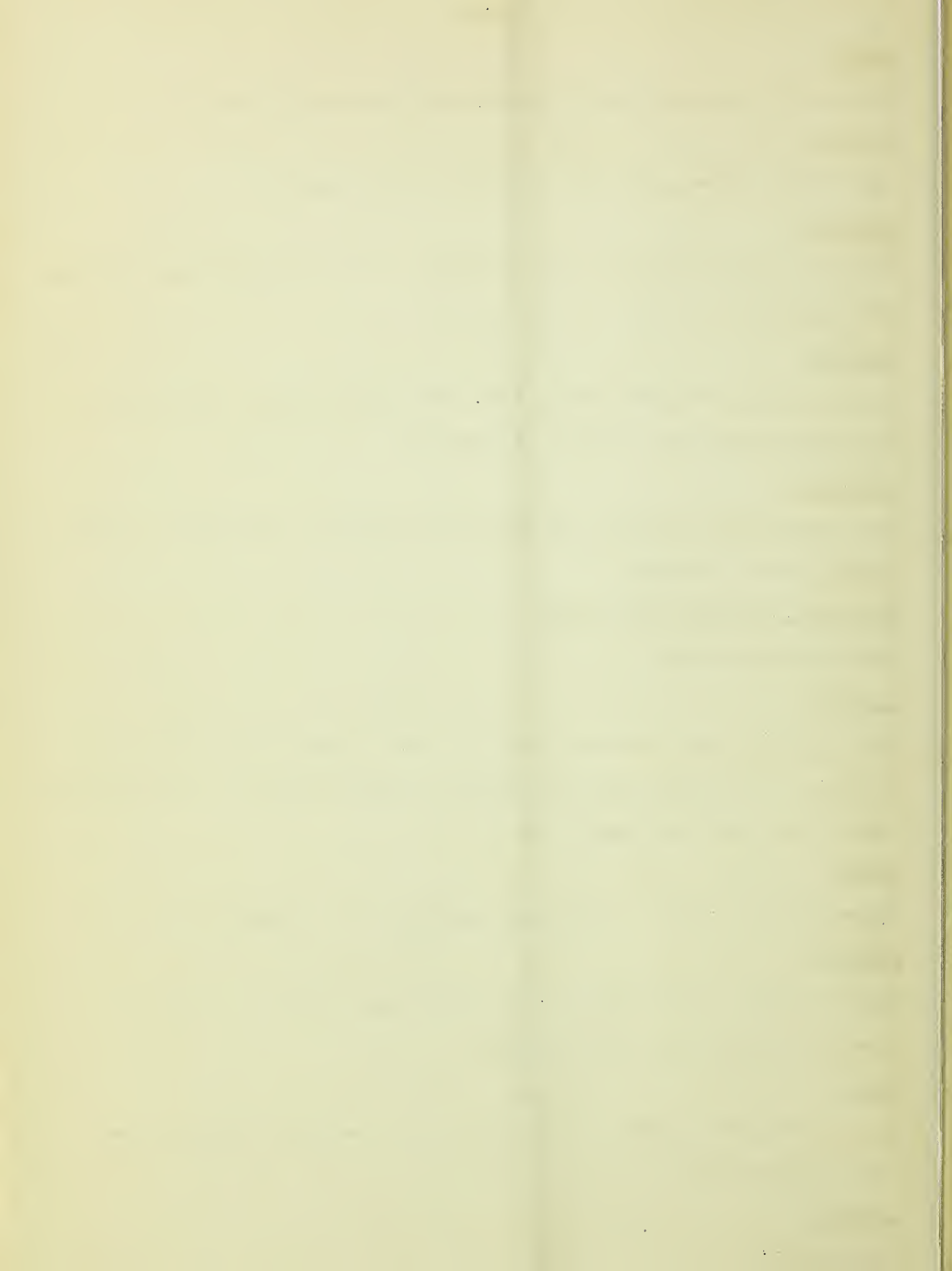
That's right. I rent from S. J. Gettleson. But back home, in Lenawee County, the land is level.

LAKIN

Oh, you're from Lenawee County. Do you know Paul Clement, the "seed corn king"?

CLEMENT

I'm his boy.



LAKIN

Well, I've known his work for a long time, and he really produces corn down there. You aren't going to try being another "seed corn king" here, are you?

CLEMENT

No, I've found out already that it doesn't pay to grow corn on land that isn't suited for corn. You can't do square farming in round country. But regardless of the topography, you can save the soil, and that's just what I'm going to do. I'm just a tenant, but the same principle holds good--save the soil, make the fields hug the hillsides.

ORGAN: I'M LOOKING OVER A FOUR LEAF CLOVER.

ALLISON

That was one year ago. And in that one year, Wayne Clement worked out a complete soil conservation plan, a plan designed to build up his soil, conserve its moisture, improve its yields. Today....

SOUND: Cow being milked.

CLEMENT

I'll be through in just a minute, Ray. Won't you come up to the house and have a bite of supper?

ROBINSON

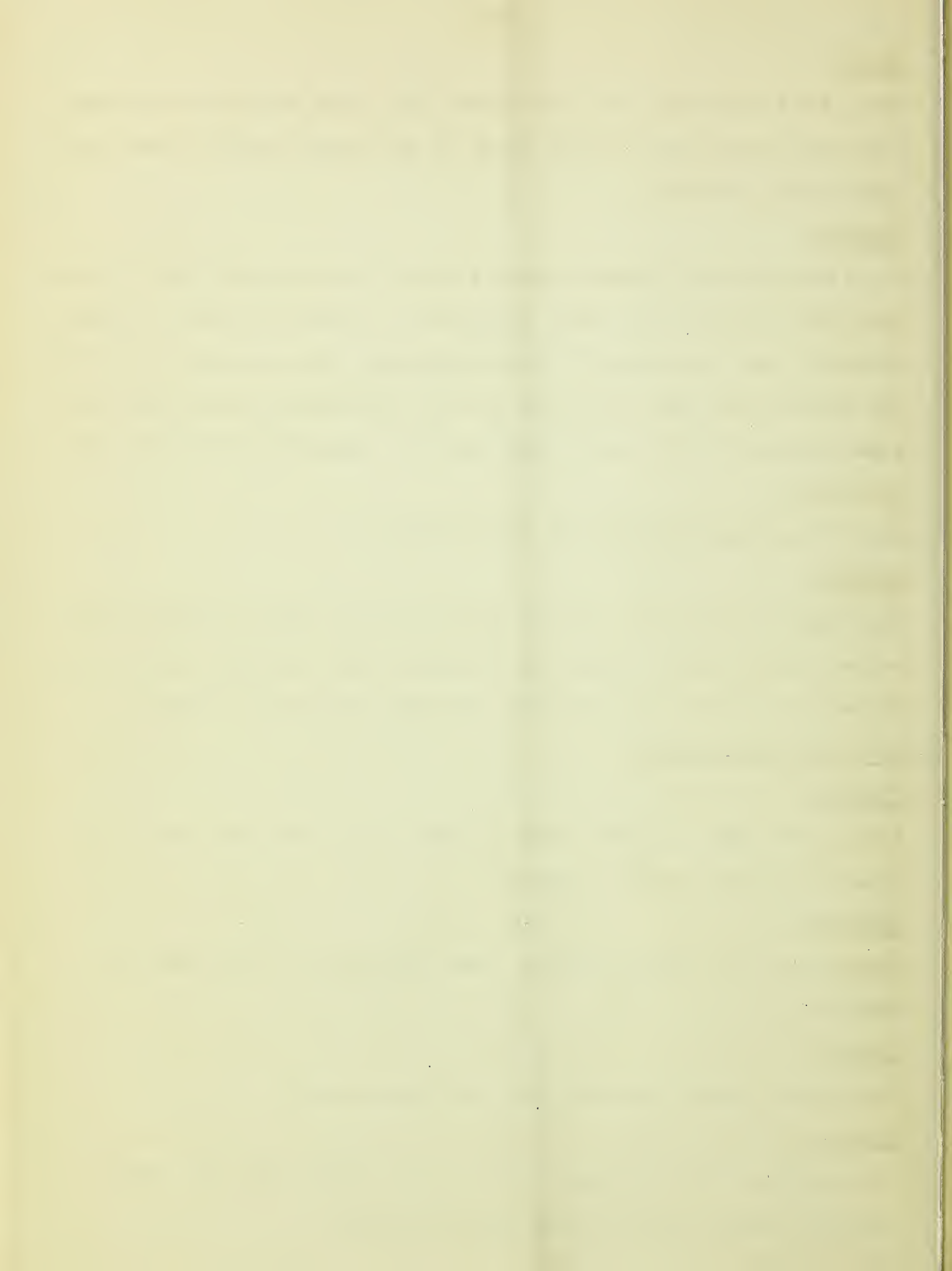
Don't guess I'd better, Wayne. Just dropped by on the way from Hartland.

CLEMENT

The farm's looking pretty good, don't you think?

ROBINSON

You sure have made a change in it, no two ways about it. That contour plowing seems to have worked wonders.



CLEMENT

The more I think about it, the more I'm enthused about it. My best crops were on sloping land this year, simply because those contour rows held the moisture.

ROBINSON

And working on the contour saves fuel, too. I've found that out.

CLEMENT

It sure does. I got about 20 bushels more corn to the acre on those sidehills, than I would have if the rows had been up and down hill.

ROBINSON

How'd your hired man like them?

CLEMENT

All right. He kidded me about the crooked rows a lot. Said we'd end up in the middle of the field and have to work our way out. Course, I'm gradually working into dairy farming. That mixture of alfalfa and smooth brome makes as good a hay as you can raise.

SOUND: Milking stops.

ROBINSON

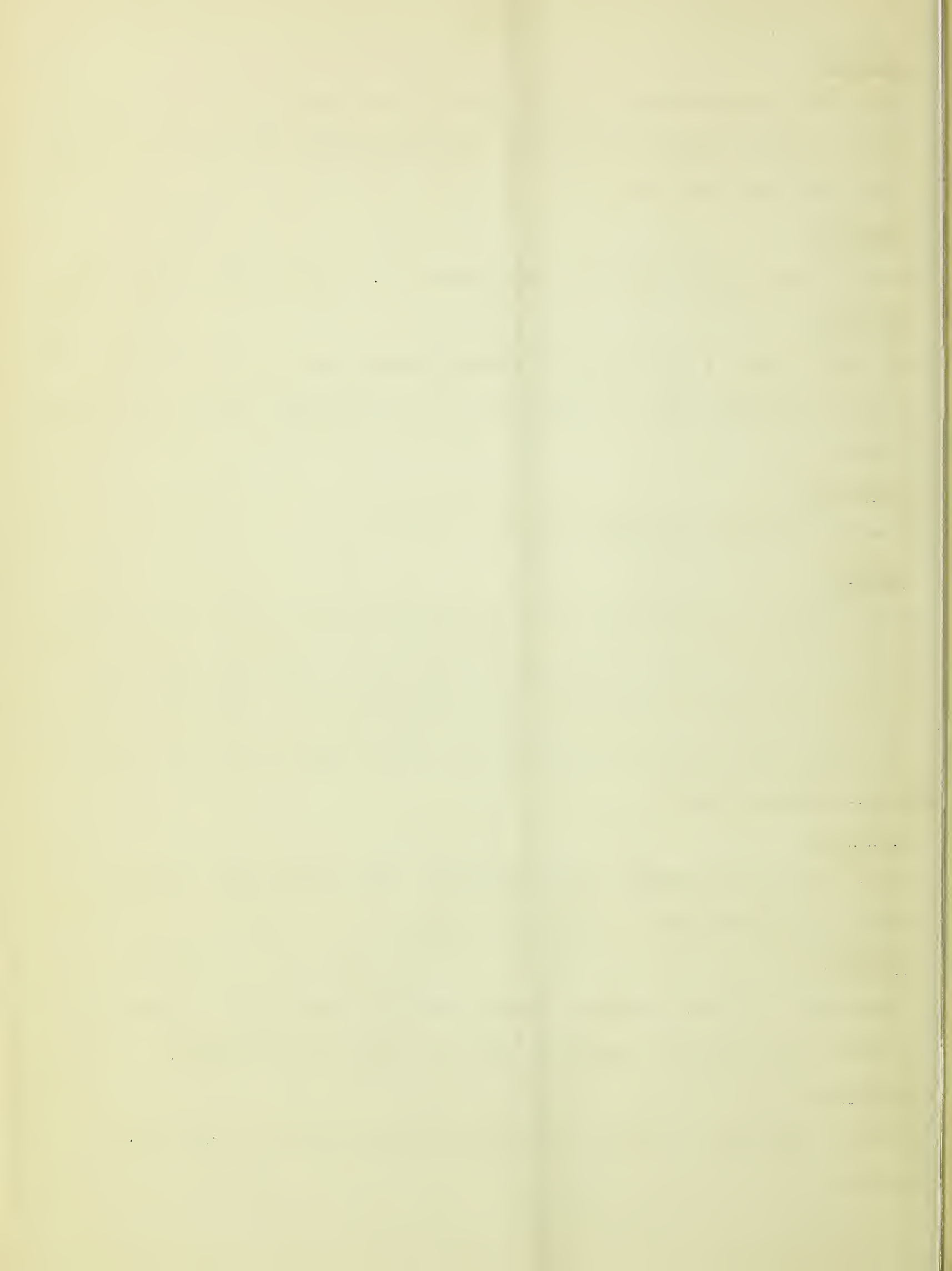
Yes, and you surprised some folks with that marsh down there-- where you seeded that reed canary grass.

CLEMENT

Yes, sir, it never had been plowed before. Most folks figured it couldn't be used for anything, but it's made good pasture.

ROBINSON

That's what most of this rolling land ought to be in, anyhow-- grass.



CLEMENT

That's the whole thing, right there. Timber land is for timber, and pasture land is for pasture. Most farmers want to farm right. I know I do. And I know you do. We don't realize that we're skinning our land by pushing it too hard with hoof and tooth and steel implements. When the field begins to wear out, we say, "It's just a little run down. It needs a little rest." But a field destroyed by erosion can't be replaced in our lifetime. We have one lifetime only. Let's treat the soil right, and somebody else will thank us for it.

ORGAN: I'M LOOKING OVER A FOUR LEAF CLOVER.

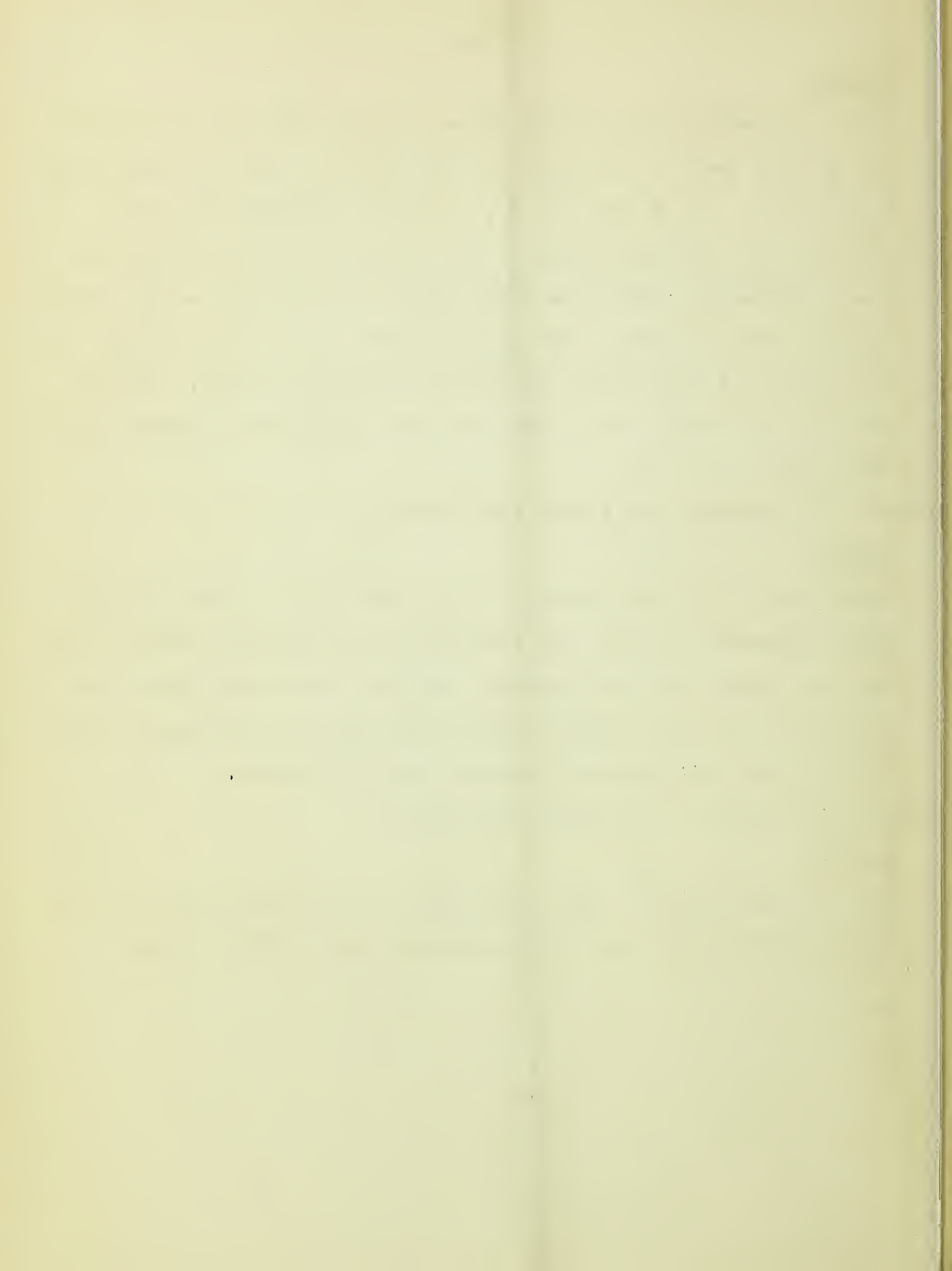
ALLISON

Poets sing of the everlasting hills. Man likes to think of solid ground beneath his feet; but there is no such thing on earth. For the soil moves, the rock weathers, and the streams run blood red with silt. But man draws his life from this soil, and wise is he who protects it--like Wayne Clement, the good tenant.

ORGAN: I'M LOOKING OVER A FOUR LEAF CLOVER.

ALLISON

And now, once more we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and to Ewing Jones.



JONES

Thank you, Paul Allison. A lot of Michigan farmers are cooperating with the Soil Conservation Service near Howell. Not all of them are tenants, naturally, but all of them are leading the way toward a more balanced agriculture in that part of the state. Harold D. Lakin, project technician at Howell, has been working with the farmers for a number of years, so I'm going to ask him to sort of paint the picture of soil conservation in southeastern Michigan. Will you, Harold?

LAKIN

Well, Ewing, Wayne Clement's story paints a pretty good picture in itself. He found out much earlier in life than most farmers that square farming methods don't work in round country. As a result, he has a new field pattern on the Gettleson farm, which he operates.

JONES

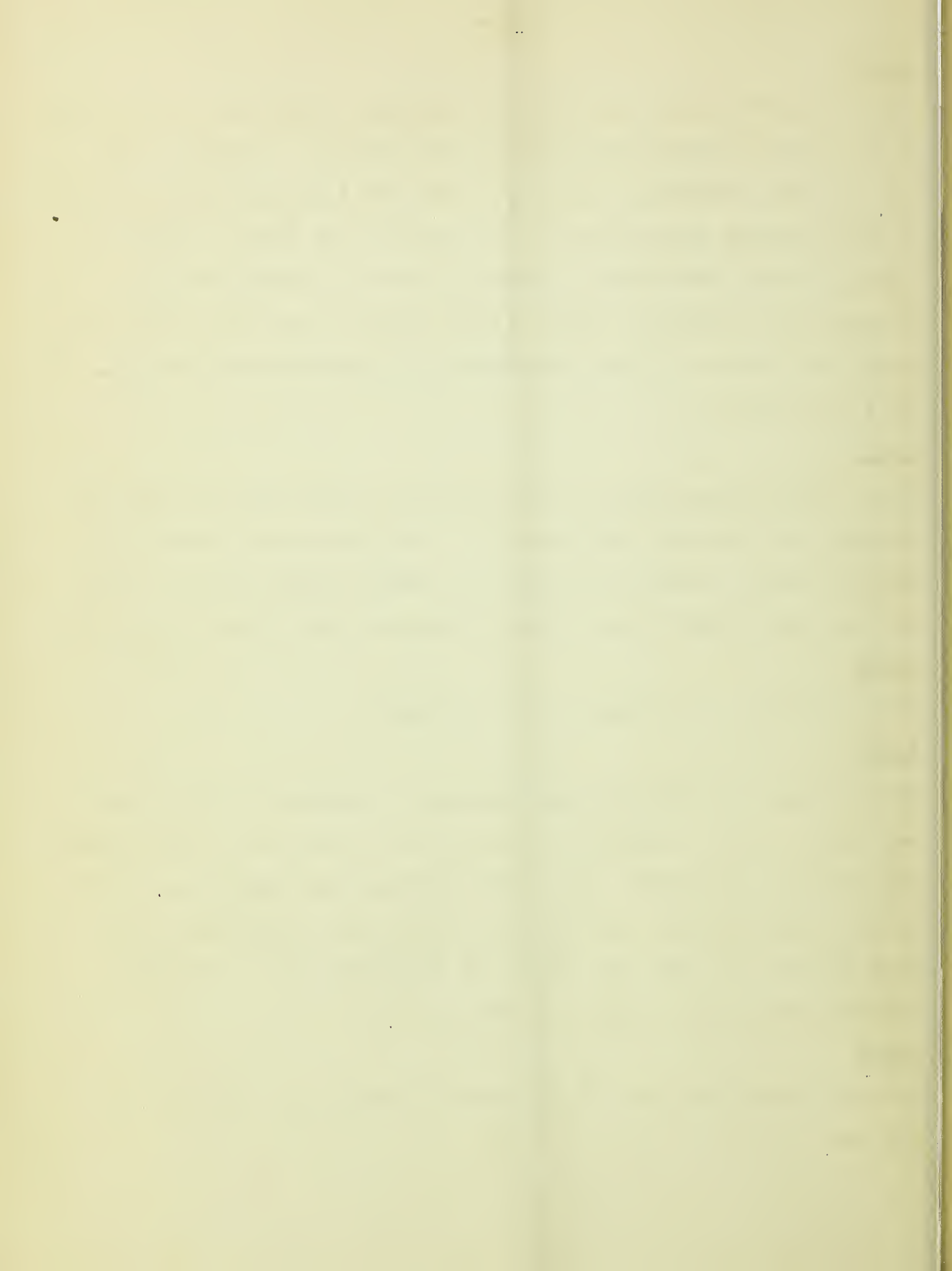
To be specific, just what is that pattern?

LAKIN

He's changed 24 acres of hilly cropland to permanent pasture and hay land. On the remaining cropland, he is following a soil building rotation, protected with contour tillage and terracing. He's on the wrong kind of farm to be the "corn king" that his father, Paul Clement, is, but he's taking an important lead in revising farming methods in our part of the state.

JONES

Now, how about your part of the state? Suppose you describe it for us.



LAKIN

The topography varies from flat to steeply rolling. The slopes vary from gentle and long to short, variable, and complex. The agriculture is almost exclusively built around livestock, with dairying predominating.

JONES

I know that soil erosion is quite severe on much of the area.

LAKIN

Yes, it is. On the average about 33% of the soil has been lost on cultivated land; nearly 27 percent on all land. We find that more than 22 percent of the cultivated land has lost from half to all of its topsoil.

JONES

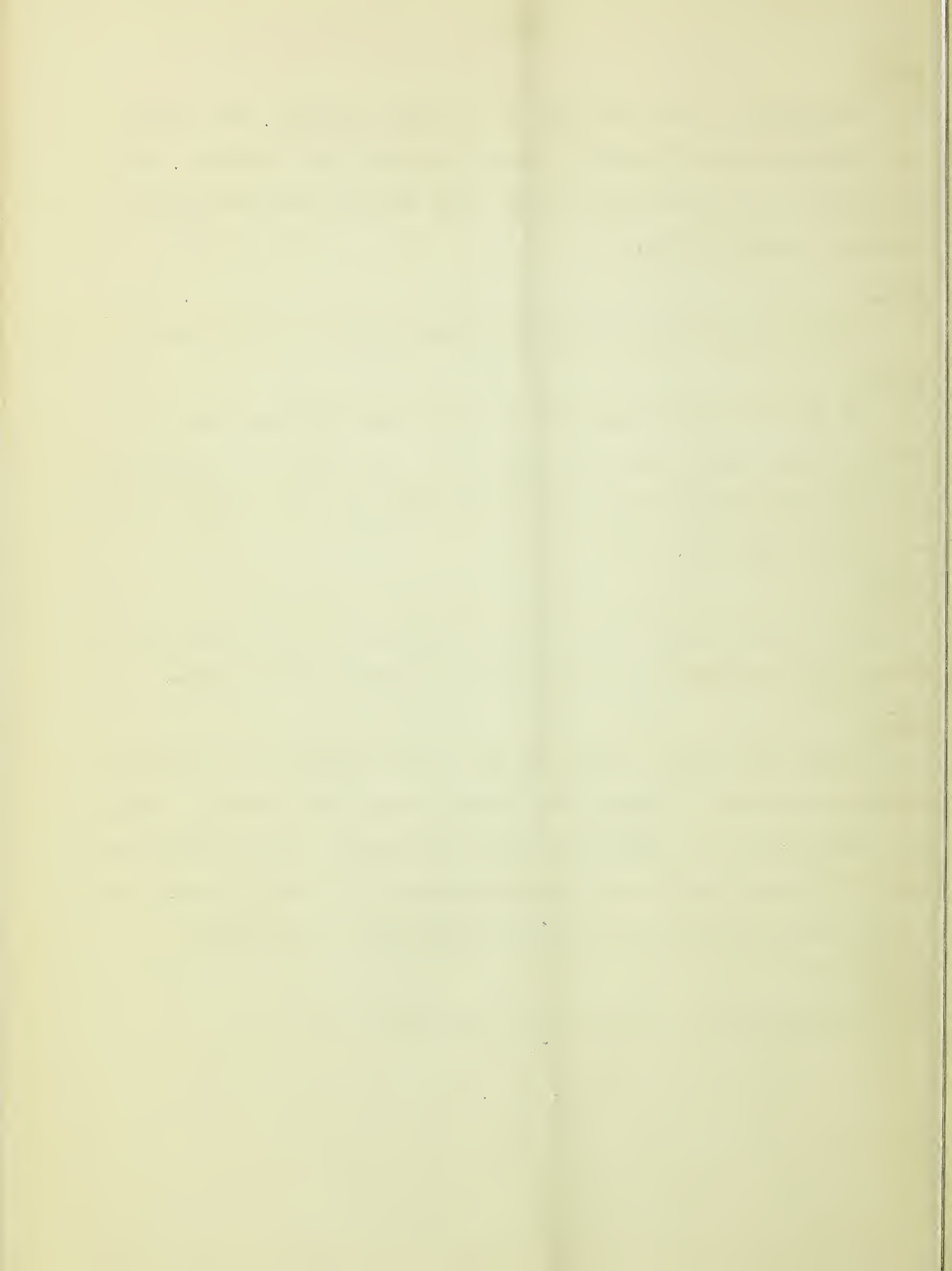
And what are you doing about these conditions? Of course, you've worked out a rounded soil conservation program for the area.

LAKIN

We've tried to, Ewing. First of all, we've worked out a complete pasture improvement program to include rotational grazing, liming and fertilizing, and reseeding where necessary. Many farmers are making a switch from corn to alfalfa silage, and this increase in forage crops has resulted in longer rotations on cropland.

JONES

Strip cropping is in the picture, too, isn't it?



LAKIN

Oh, yes. We've had a lot of trouble in starting strip cropping, because so many of the farms have stone fences that are costly to move. But on the whole, we've been gratified to see so many farmers adopt strip cropping. Then we're including terraces and diversion ditches to control erosion. There are other practices too; and remember this: farmers in Livingston, Genesee, and Oakland Counties are just like Wayne Clement said. They want to farm right. And, step by step, they're headed in that direction.

JONES

Thank you, Harold Lakin, of Howell, Michigan. If your cooperating farmers can't be corn kings, they can be soil builders, and that's a mighty proud title in itself. As the old Norse farmer up in Coon Valley, Wisconsin, says, "This country is healing."

SOUND: Carnival noises.

MIND READER

Won't you come in and let me tell your fortune?

FARMER

Are you a mind reader?

MIND READER

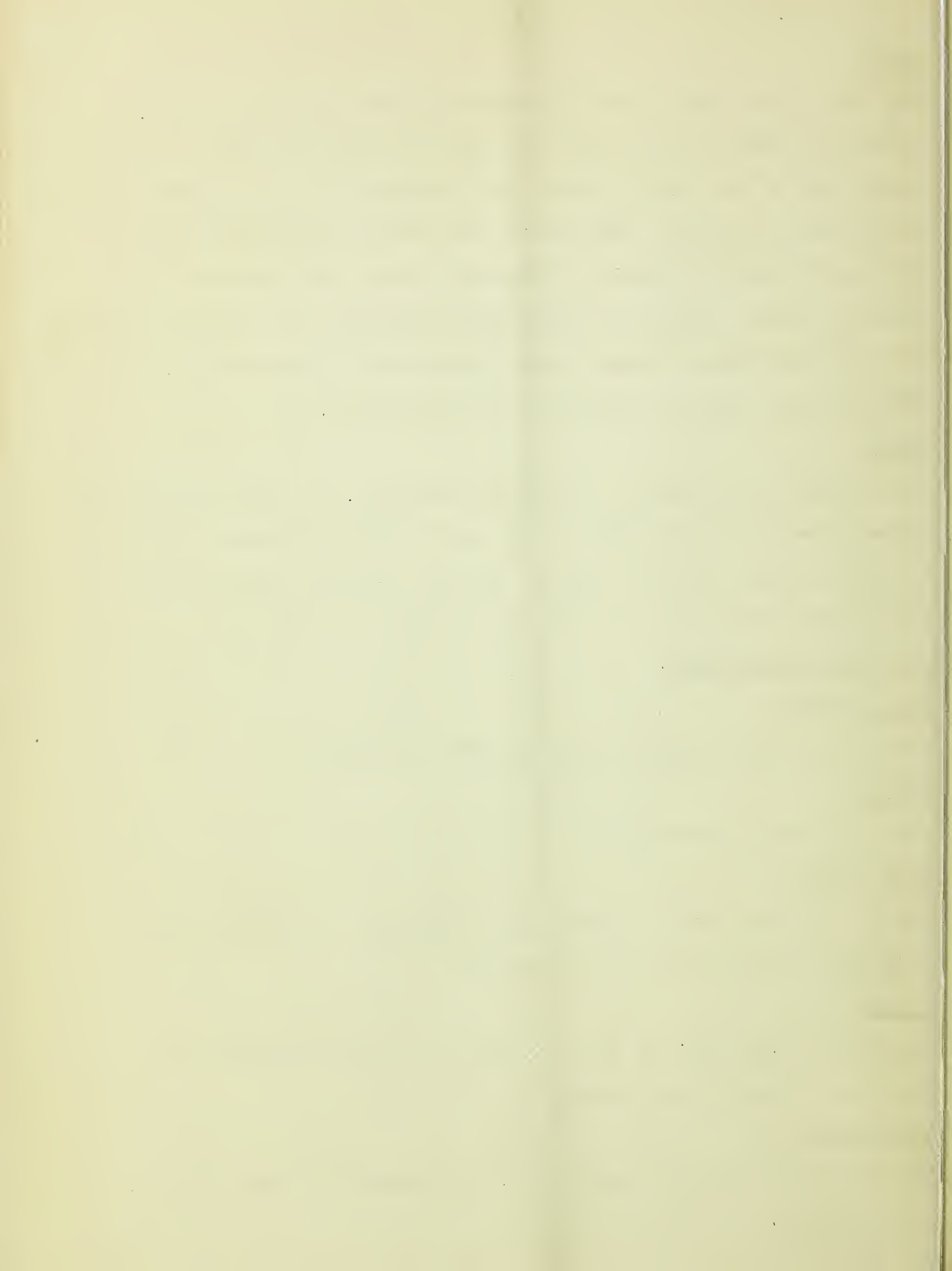
Yes, I can tell your fortune...past, present, or future, your birthday, your wife's name, anything.

FARMER

Anything? Then tell me where I can get a copy of the latest bulletin on soil conservation.

MIND READER

That's the one thing I can't tell. But here's the man who can.
Paul Allison.



ALLISON

If you would like a copy of the latest bulletin on erosion control, telling how to conserve soil and moisture, drop a letter or a penny postcard to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. The address again, Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. Next week, "They Save Soil in Iowa."

SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ALLISON

Fortunes Washed Away is a studio presentation of the agriculture department of the Nation's Station.

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